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ABSTRACT

The Teaching English as a Second Language Program was developed as a response to the needs of a multicultural population. It provides services geared to the individual needs of non-English speaking children in elementary and junior high schools. Children were seen for five 40 to 45 minute periods weekly in groups of 10 to 12. An audio-lingual method of instruction was used. Program evaluation was based on observations, interviews, and pre and post test results. The TESL program proved effective in nine out of ten grade levels and met the need for which it was intended. Strengths of the program were found to be the pull-out approach (children were taken from their regular classes for special services) and the small group/individualized instruction using audio-lingual teaching aids. The evaluation showed that the staff was enthusiastic and the administrative organization was capable. (MK)

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Community School District 20

Special Needs TESL Program

1978 - 1979

Function Number 4249

Final Report

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Overview

The 1978-79 Teaching English As A Second Language Component (TESL) of the Special Needs Program (P.S.E.N.) was developed as a response to the needs of the multiethnic population living in the area served by Community School District 20. This area is characterized by the continued influx of varied nationality groups such as Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Israeli, Italian and Spanish. These groups have brought with them children who attend District 20 schools. TESL serves as a most useful way of teaching these children English so that they can more readily function in the educational mainstream.

The TESL Program's aim is to supplement the regular school program by providing additional services geared to the individual needs of the non-English speaking children. The targeted children are seen in groups of 10-12 which are pulled out of their regular classroom for one, 40-45 minute period of instruction each day. Students with the least command of English may receive two such periods of instruction per day.

In their instruction TESL teachers utilize an audio-lingual approach in which children hear language patterns modeled by the teacher and repeat what they have heard. Students are also encouraged to utilize their new language and lessons contain activities such as dialogues, games, rhymes, riddles and poems which are practical devices to practice structures and vocabulary in English, their second language.

The children targeted to receive TESL services are selected on the basis of their scores on the New York City Language Assessment Battery (LAB). Once selected, they are grouped according to grade when there are sufficient pupils in each grade at a given level of English competence to form an ESL group. If the number is insufficient, pupils

from two or more grades may be grouped together. In all, the original proposal called for 456 students to be serviced.

Utilizing the services of 8 teachers, the TESL Program operated at 9 schools in the district: P.102, P.104, P.105, P.185, P.200, P.204, P.205, J.62 and J.259. One teacher serviced two schools and at one school the program did not begin until March 1979. The Program was also intended to supplement the District's Title VII Bilingual Program. TESL teachers were to communicate with the regualr (tax levy) classroom teachers by written communication, staff conferences, grade conferences and oral communications.

Overall program coordination was provided by the District's Bilingual Director, a Title VII position. Coordination was accomplished by monthly staff meetings and on-site visits. An important part of the coordination involved in-service training focussed on matters such as evaluation and selection of materials, communication with classroom teachers and helping students improve their self-image and peer relationships.

Evaluation Activities

The TESL Program was evaluated by:

(1) Site visits to nearly all of the participating schools. During these site visits, teachers and principals were interviewed. In addition, classes and testing were observed.

(2) Pre and post program test scores on the LAB were analyzed by grade in order to assess program impact.

(3) The TESL Program Coordinator was interviewed.

Findings

A. Interviews and Observations

Implemented in accord with the program guidelines, the TESL Program was most effective in meeting the need it was designed to serve. The teachers were first rate. Of the eight teachers, four had been in the program for several years. One had been part-time during the previous year and the remaining three were new to the program. However, two of these new teachers had considerable experience in other specialized pull-out programs. Generally, the new teachers brought with them an enthusiasm which was most healthy and valuable to the program.

In the classrooms, which were attractively decorated with posters and instructional aids, the type of instruction we observed followed the approach described above in the program overview. For example, one teacher utilized signs such as "stop" and "entrance" to teach students how to function in the day-to-day world in which they found themselves. Another teacher used the clever device of having students repeat words, first in a loud and then in a soft voice. All of the teachers utilized a variety of materials as appropriate to the teaching situation. Books such as English Around the World, Steps to English, Lado English Series and a number of teacher made materials were most effectively employed in the oral instruction in English.

It must also be noted that TESL is most enthusiastically welcomed and supported by the administration of the schools in which it is located. To a person, the administrators interviewed felt that TESL's contribution to their school's tax levy instructional program was most valuable. In their opinion the pull out approach was not only effective

in its own right but also well articulated with tax levy instruction. Its value was especially appreciated because of the multiethnic population changes in the areas of their schools. In fact, a few of the administrators interviewed anticipated greater demand for TESL services next year and in the coming years because of these continuing population changes.

Materials are up-to-date and in good supply. Each of the teachers was allocated money for supplies which enabled them to purchase the necessary materials.

The TESL Program also enjoyed very capable administration. The requisite monthly meetings were held and during the meeting staff training conducted. This training focussed on type of instruction rendered, new TESL materials available and other matters of importance to the program's operation. The TESL teachers, especially the new ones, found these meetings to be effective and valuable to their work.

B. Test Scores

Since the aim of the TESL Program was to increase language proficiency, the LAB was employed for the pre and post program testing that took place in September 1978 and March 1979. Of the program's students, 406 were both pre and post tested. The test socres were analyzed for each grade level serviced by the program by computing pre and posttest means, mean increase and the statistic "T" for correlated samples. In a separate calculation we also computed the percentage of students at each grade level who scored above the 21st percentile on the LAB posttest. (See Table of Test Scores on page 5).

Table Of Test Scores: P.S.E.N. - TESL:

LAB Scores - Pre and Posttest Means, Increases (Raw Score and Percentile), T-Values and Percent Above 21st Percentile for Each Grade Level Serviced.

Grade Level	N	Pretest Mean Raw Score	Corr. %ile	Posttest Mean Raw Score	Corr. %ile	Increase Raw Score	Corr. %ile	T-Value	% Above 21st Percenti
KG	81	12.6	1	18.8	4	+6.2	+3	11.92**	30%
One	104	17.5	1	28.3	23	+10.8	+22	15.20**	38%
Two	57	24.1	1	35.1	20	+11.0	+19	10.68**	88%
Three	25	31.3	1	51.0	16	+19.7	+15	7.22**	40%
Four	20	33.9	2	55.2	10	+21.3	+8	5.52*	30%
Five	30	40.5	1	60.1	5	+19.6	+4	6.64**	23%
Six	19	42.3	1	63.3	4	+21.0	+3	3.85N.S.	32%
Seven	27	43.7	1	58.6	6	+14.9	+5	7.41**	37%
Eight	33	47.4	2	58.8	6	+11.4	+4	4.80*	12%
Nine	13	49.7	1	60.1	3	+10.4	+2	5.11*	8%

** Significant at .01 level
* Significant at .05 level
N.S. Not Significant

As the Table of Test Scores shows, the TESL Program was generally very successful. On six of the ten grade levels serviced, the mean gains were significant at the .01 level, i.e., the chances are less than one out of 100 that the gains could have occurred as a result of sampling error. In other words, they are genuine and attributable to program efforts. On three of the other grade levels, the gains are significant at .05. Although this is not as much certainty at .01, it can still be said that the program was effective. It is only on the 6th grade level, where fewer students were serviced, that the mean gain was not significant.

To supplement the analysis of mean gains, we examined the number of students scoring above the critical 21st percentile on the LAB posttest. This percentile is critical because it indicates a minimum competency in English. Even though many students started with extremely low LAB scores, for the program as a whole, no less than 158 or 39% scored above the 21st percentile. The analysis by grade in the last column of the Table of Test Scores shows that the percentages were very high in the lower grades, particularly in 2nd grade. Achievement of such good results on the lower grade levels can only be viewed positively since it means that these students are in a much better position to cope with mainstream education in their later elementary and junior high years.

There are two problems connected with testing. One is that the process of testing is itself cumbersome. Between three and four weeks of program time are lost whenever LAB tests are administered at a school. Since the LAB is administered twice each year, nearly two months of instructional time may be lost. Although the testing time is diminished as larger proportions of children have been tested at each school, the problem remains. The second problem is that the tests do not always

differentiate between language and reading problems. Children who read poorly do poorly on the written LAB's and yet are not serviced best by a TESL program. Neither of these problems has an easy solution but both need to be given further thought and work.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Effective at nine out of ten grade levels serviced and bringing 39% of participating students over the 21st percentile on the LAB, the TESL Program, a component of the larger P.S.E.N. effort, certainly met the need for which it was intended. The program provides a useful, cost effective way for District 20 to serve the needs of a rapidly changing, multiethnic school population. Its strength lies in the use of the pull-out approach and small group, individualized instruction employing a wide range of audio-lingual teaching aids. Moreover, there was a dedicated, enthusiatic staff and capable coordination at the district level.

At this point, our only recommendations for the program are:

(1) The P.S.E.N. - TESL Program should be recycled. In this recycling, the pull-out approach should be retained.

(2) The district should explore alternatives to the present LAB test.